

Los Alamitos High School's "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" Shines Bright

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The many sights and booming sounds of an urban train station are an overwhelming adventure. With bright lights, flashing words, and piercing sounds, even the most experienced travelers can feel over-loaded by senses. Los Alamitos' production of "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" captures the anxiousness of a new place through the lens of 15-year-old Christopher Boone, an autistic math genius whose inquisitive nature leads him on a journey to uncover the truth behind the murder of his neighbor's dog, Wellington.

Louie Gallagher brings Christopher to life with subtle yet effective physicalities. Gallagher's portrayal is consistent and realistic, selecting moments to show the audience his anxiety and emotion, making his performance more powerful.

Christopher's perspective is revealed through the entire production, but notably by the versatile ensemble, who act as neighbors, passersby, and even set pieces. Their fluid and confident motions tell a story all their own but serve most predominantly to bring Gallagher's portrayal of Christopher beyond itself and spread across the entire stage.

The set, developed by Will Schneider, is complemented by lighting by Emma Meza. The dark stage is decorated with a linear grid of neon lights, which change and shift to reflect Christopher's emotional state. Images to further paint Christopher's thoughts decorate the stage through colorful projections, designed and operated by Alexi Amescua. The visual amalgamation of colors, lights, and sound serves to both frame the mindset of our protagonist and depict some of the overwhelming aspects of daily life which affect people of special needs every day.

Additionally notable are performances by the adults in Christopher's life. Christopher's father, Ed, played by Kobe Takeda, embodies a worrisome and caring father figure. Opposite Ed is Christopher's mother, Judy, played by Leah Schiffer. Takeda and Schiffer's diametrically opposed performances show the range of responses parents of special needs children can embody.

Los Alamitos' production of "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" is a captivating adventure through the lens of a typically under-represented community. The combination of consistently beautiful technical elements, as well as truthful and dynamic characters makes the production a captivating and alluring tale.